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Detroit District

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Emergency dredging set to begin at St. Joseph Harbor

Detroit — Recently the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District awarded a contract to dredge the federal navigation channel at St. Joseph (inner) harbor. The contractor, Great Lakes Docks & Materials LLC from Muskegon, Mich., was awarded over \$1.8 million for a mechanical dredging contract. They will dredge 173,000 cubic yards from the federal navigation channel in order to ensure safe passage for all vessels entering St. Joseph Harbor.

St. Joseph Inner Harbor is scheduled for dredging approximately 25,000 cubic yards of dredged material every three to four years. It was last dredged in 2006, and therefore not scheduled for dredging again until 2009, at the earliest. However, on March 24, 2008 the tug barge PERE MARQUETTE 41 was unable to reach commercial docks in the Inner Harbor due to unprecedented shoaling in the federal navigation channel. A survey completed soon after showed there was only seven feet of water available in the 21 feet channel. On April 7, the Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers declared the St. Joseph Inner Harbor an Emergency Dredging project, and work began to re-open the channel.

The Corps is currently looking into the cause of this unprecedented shoaling and whether this amount is likely to occur again in the future. In just one year, hundreds of thousands of tons of cargo, including coal, asphalt, salt, cement, limestone, pig iron, fuel oil, liquid asphalt, and forest products are shipped through this channel.

“We have a dynamic team that worked tirelessly to complete the needed requirements to award this emergency dredging contract,” said Wayne Schloop, Chief of Operations, Detroit District, Corps of Engineers. “This will reopen the inner harbor shipping lanes for the 2008 commercial navigation season to support the vessels carrying cargo in and out of St. Joseph Harbor.

It is anticipated this project will begin in early June and be completed by the end of August.

The US Army Corps of Engineers is proud of our contributions to the economic and water resource development in the St. Joseph, Mich. area, and look forward to working with Great Lakes Dock & Materials LLC in completing this work. For more information about this project, contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Affairs Officer, Lynn Duerod at 313-226-4680, or the Project Manager, Angie Mundell at 313-226-5005.

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<p>The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District civil works program encompasses 82,000 square miles of land inhabited by about 14 million people in Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. The Corps operates and/or maintains 94 harbors. Its mission includes real estate transactions, flood control, regulatory activities, disaster response, and mobilization readiness.</p>
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